

XLIX.—On the N. Australian Rats referred to the Genus
Mesembriomys. By OLDFIELD THOMAS.

WHILE working out a very distinct new rat from Kimberley, N. Australia, sent to the British Museum by Mr. B. H. Woodward, of Perth, I have had occasion to examine all the species referred by me in 1906 to the genus *Ammomys**, whose name, being preoccupied, has since been altered to *Mesembriomys*.

Apart from the group-characters then described these species are of a very heterogeneous nature, and I am now convinced that they should be further divided into three genera, whose differential characters would be as follows:—

I. MESEMBRIOMYS.

Ammomys, Thos. l. c. (nec Raf.). Type *Mus hirsutus*, Gould.

Size very large. Form normal; feet narrow, fairly long. Tail very long, jerboa-like, heavily tufted terminally.

Skull large and stout, peculiarly high and heavy in the anterior frontal region, its highest point at or in front of the front edge of m^1 , and its upper profile strongly bowed at this point.

Molars comparatively normal in structure, not specially laminate; inner cusp of anterior lamina of m^1 situated, as is usual, behind the level of the middle cusp, opposite the gap between the latter and the middle cusp of the second lamina. Lower molars (m_1 and m_2) each with a well-marked re-entrant concavity behind, in which a distinct median supplementary cusp is placed.

Species. *M. hirsutus* (*Mus hirsutus*, Gould) and *M. macrurus* (*Hapalotis macrura*, Peters).

II. ZYZOMYS.

Genus novum.

Type *Mus argurus*, Thos.

Size quite small. Form delicate. Tail slender or thickened, lightly pencilled terminally, not heavily haired.

Skull light and delicate, not bowed in the frontal region, its highest point above m^3 .

* Ann. & Mag. Nat. Hist. (7) xvi. p. 84 (1906). I may take this opportunity of drawing attention to an important *lapsus calami* in this paper. On p. 83, bottom line, for *Conilurus* read *Notomys*.

Teeth as in *Mesembriomys* (see figure in original description of *Mus argurus* *).

Species. *Z. argurus* with its subspecies *Z. a. indutus*, Thos.

The delicate slender build of this animal and its low flat skull will distinguish it from the large convex-skulled *Mesembriomys*, to which, however, in the essential characters of tooth-structure it undoubtedly bears a near affinity.

III. LAOMYS.

Genus novum.

Type *Laomys woodwardi*, sp. n.

Size medium. Form comparatively short. Fur crisp, almost spinous. Feet short and broad. Tail short, thickened basally, tapering, heavily haired throughout.

Skull flattened above, its highest point above m^3 , its general shape rather recalling that of *Leporillus*.

Teeth with the laminae very distinctly transverse and separated, the inner cusp of each of the two first lamina of m^1 in line with the middle cusp, so that the transverse grooves between the laminae are complete, straight, and uninterrupted. The teeth therefore tend towards the distinctly laminate structure found in *Phlæomys*, *Otomys*, &c. Lower teeth also simply laminate, the laminae not or scarcely pinched in at their middle point, and the posterior lamina of m_1 and m_2 without any posterior concavity in which a supplementary cusp might stand.

Species. *L. woodwardi*, sp. n., and *L. pedunculatus* (*Conilurus pedunculatus*, Waite). The more extreme of the two is selected as the type.

The species of this genus are remarkable-looking animals, quite unlike ordinary Muridæ, and more suggesting members of the South-American Octodontinæ.

The following is the description of the new species:—

Laomys woodwardi, sp. n.

A greyish species, with a short, hairy, but untufted tail.

Size larger than in *L. pedunculatus*. Fur peculiarly coarse and crisp, almost spinous. General colour coarsely lined pale greyish, rather paler than "drab-grey." Individually the hairs are pale grey basally (grey no. 8), becoming drab-grey terminally, about half of them with black tips. Under surface white, the stiff bristly hairs white to their bases; line of demarcation on sides not sharply marked. Ears large, broad, pale grey. Upper surface of hands and

* Ann. & Mag. Nat. Hist. (6) iii. p. 434 (1889).

feet greyish white, the fingers and toes pure white. Tail short, tapering, heavily haired throughout, "slate-grey" (arising from a mixture of blackish and white hairs) above, dull whitish below.

Skull markedly larger than that of *L. pedunculatus*, but of similar shape. Supraorbital edges sharply square, not ridged. Palatal foramina long and narrow. Bullæ smaller than in the smaller species.

Molars much larger than in the allied form, but of quite similar structure.

Dimensions of the type (measured in the flesh):—

Head and body 167 mm.; tail 114; hind foot 29; ear 21.

Skull: greatest length 41; basilar length 32.5; zygomatic breadth 21.3; nasals 14; interorbital breadth 5; palatilar length 18.7; diastema 11.5; palatal foramina 8.3; length of upper molar series 7.2.

Hab. Parry's Creek, near Wyndham, E. Kimberley, N.W. Australia. Alt. 100'.

Type. Old female. B.M. no. 9. 2. 16. 3. Original number 29. Collected 9th October, 1908, by J. P. Rogers. Presented by the Perth Museum through B. H. Woodward, Esq. Two specimens.

"Trapped in a rough stony gorge."—*J. P. R.*

This species is readily distinguishable from *L. pedunculatus* by its larger size, shorter tail, and greyer colour.

L.—*New Species of Paradoxurus, of the P. philippinensis Group, and a new Paguma.* By OLDFIELD THOMAS.

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HITHERTO the Palm-Civets of the Philippines, North and South, and of Borneo, have been considered as all belonging to one species, for which the name *P. philippinensis*, Jourd. (first locality mentioned, Luzon), has been used.

But a comparison of the material in the British Museum shows that the Mindanao animal is materially larger than that from Luzon, that the Bornean one is quite peculiar in colour, and that an additional form of the group occurs in the Tawi-Tawi Islands, between N. Borneo and Mindanao.

I also take this opportunity to describe the Hainan representative of *Paguma larvata*.